



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL

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MEMORANDUM

To: Water Policy Subcommittee Members

From: *m2* Mary Vandembosch
444-5367

Date: April 25, 2000

Subject: Decisions to Be Made at the May 4, 2000 Subcommittee Meeting

We are nearing the end of the interim which means that you must make some decisions in order to accomplish all that you wish within the time remaining.

Decisions on each of these topics must be made at the May 4, 2000 Subcommittee Meeting.

Recommendations and Public Comment

If the Water Policy Subcommittee intends to recommend proposed legislation or make other substantial recommendations to the EQC, the schedule will be as follows:

1. Circulate draft proposal(s) for public comment in late June.¹
2. Comments due mid July.
3. Subcommittee decision on recommendations to EQC before July 28.
4. Recommendation to and decision by EQC July 28.
5. Final decision by EQC on content of proposed legislation (if any) on September 15.

Do you want to circulate a draft proposal or options for public comment?

¹If no proposals are put forward, a later schedule can be followed for public comment. This will allow staff and commenters to place a higher priority on issues where the EQC intends to take action.

___ Regulation of large swine operations

___ Other (specify):

If so, specific proposals and options must be identified at the May 4, 2000 meeting (or May 5 if they relate to water quality monitoring). Some potential options for swine operations are identified in a separate memo.

EQC Water Policy Report

One of the EQC's statutory water policy duties is to report to the Legislature. The law does not specify what needs to be reported. However, the EQC is required to advise the Legislature on the adequacy of the state's water policy and on important state, regional, national, and international developments that affect Montana's water resources. In July 1999 I mailed you a copy of the 1996 report. I am assuming you all have a copy of the 1998 report.

Some of the challenges I suggest that you take into consideration with these reports are:

- Information overload. Staff hear a lot of complaints about receiving too much information.
- The reports become quickly outdated. (The report must be adopted by the EQC on September 15 at the latest. After September 30, I am required to spend full time drafting bills. The last time that report can be updated is the beginning of August.)
- Limited staff resources. (I will also be writing one or two reports for the Land Use/Environmental Trends Subcommittee by myself.)

What information should be included in the Water Policy Report?

Option 1: Focus on one of the policy issues identified above.

Option 2: Briefly describe the water policy issues that the EQC was briefed on this interim and very briefly (in bullets or paragraphs) describe how the EQC complied with its statutory duties.

Option 3: Do a series of two-page briefing papers on selected water policy issues that the EQC was briefed on this interim. These issues must be identified now.

As always, you are welcome to identify other options.

Do you want public comment on the draft report?

If you intend to recommend proposed legislation, I am assuming that the Subcommittee and the

full EQC will want public comment. If you do not intend to seek public comment on proposals, you need to make a decision regarding whether or not to seek public comment on the information contained in the report.

Agenda Items for Future Meetings

How much time do you need for your meeting in July?

The schedule for subcommittee meetings July 27-28 will depend on which subcommittees are considering making recommendations to the EQC. If the Water Policy Subcommittee and the Land Use/Environmental Trends Subcommittee are considering recommendations, these are the options you have for meeting:

July 26 **6 p.m. (or earlier) to 10 p.m.**

July 27 **8 a.m. to 10 a.m.**
POSSIBLY IN COMBINATION WITH

July 28 after the EQC meeting (for agenda items that do not require a recommendation to EQC)

When do you want to meet in July?

What items do you want on the agenda in July and September?

Necessary items:

- Review and approval of report.
- Analyze and comment on the Water Information System of the Natural Resource Information System (NRIS).

Two of your meetings have been cancelled. Unless you are willing to allocate more time to meet, I do not believe that you have time to do everything in the work plan. **Please review the work plan and decide which of the remaining items are a priority for the remaining Subcommittee meetings.** We will discuss these in light of the time you are willing to spend meeting.

I appreciate your taking the time to think about these questions.